

## Communion

Many names for this:

**Communion:** 1 Corinthians 10:16 NKJV - "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Communion: koinonia - fellowship, community, joint participation, intimacy.

Same word as used in Acts 2:42 NKJV - "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Same word also used in Philippians 3:10 NKJV - "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the *fellowship* of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,"

**The Lord's Supper:** 1 Corinthians 11:20 NKJV - "Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

**The Breaking of Bread:** describes the action Jesus took before dispersing the bread.

**The Lord's Table:** 1 Corinthians 10:21 NKJV - "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."

**Eucharist:** Term used by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, United Methodists and Lutherans among others. Earliest uses from Ignatius of Antioch and Justin Martyr in the late First or early Second Century.

Lit: Greek "εὐχαριστία" (transliterated as "eucharistia"), which means *thankfulness, gratitude, giving of thanks*

Used in all 4 accounts, as Jesus took either the cup, or the bread and the cup, and gave thanks, then passed them out.

Described in Matthew 26:26-30 NKJV - "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Also described in Mark 14:22-26 NKJV - "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then

He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave [it] to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Described in Luke 22:15-20 NKJV - "Then He said to them, "With [fervent] desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide [it] among yourselves; "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And He took bread, gave thanks and broke [it], and gave [it] to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also [took] the cup after supper, saying, "This cup [is] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

Presented in a bit different order, but all the necessary details are there.

Finally, the last account is in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NKJV - "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the [same] night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke [it] and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner [He] also [took] the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

The Lord gave us two distinct examples of communion, the one being when the 12 were present with Him before His death, and the other being a time of personal instruction from the Lord to the apostle Paul.

What is the purpose of communion?

Communion is a memorial for believers. "This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me..."

When communion was instituted here in the gospels, Jesus was marking the beginning of the NEW covenant. "This is the new covenant in my Blood..."

Communion gives us tangible imagery of what Jesus accomplished.

Communion is a proclamation: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death"

Communion is done in anticipation: "till He comes."

Can anyone take it?

Why would you want to?

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 NKJV - "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks [this] cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

What is it?

It is a symbolic ritual that Christians partake in to commemorate what the Lord has accomplished.

We are remembering until we no longer need to "remember," anticipating the time when we will "know as we are known."

Vastly different teachings on this matter.

Ritual of communion is meant to bring us into koinonia or fellowship with both the Savior and the fellow believer partaking with us.

And yet, upon its misinterpretation, the Lord's table has divided the church.

Take the word "Sacrament." The original definition as translated from the Latin word *sacramentum*: equivalent to Latin *sacrā* (re) to devote +

- mentum -ment

The Roman Catholic Church defines sacrament as: "*efficacious* (ef-i-**kay**-shuhs) *signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.*"

The Anglican Church of England: "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

In modern English, words often change their meaning due to common usage.

Sacrament is a perfect example. It used to mean "to devote" or a sacred vow. By implication, this would define it as something one party does out of devotion for another party. Now, it means when the first party devotes, the second party imparts something.

More specifically, when a believer participates in one of the seven sacraments, the Eucharist being one, grace is imparted to the believer from God.

Without partaking in the sacrament, that grace is not given.

I can see how this would make attending mass and receiving the Eucharist of paramount importance to the believer. And by implication, if one were to refuse or be refused the Eucharist, the consequences would be eternal.

And speaking of Eucharist, which was defined as thanksgiving? Now it's synonymous with Mass.

So while still looking at the re-interpretation of words and meanings, and at the divisions presented by The Lord's Table, we cannot ignore the erroneous and morbid teaching of transubstantiation.

This word literally means the transformation of one substance to another. And this is applied to the elements of communion.

The teaching of the transubstantiation of the elements was first taught by "[Hildebert de Lavardin](#), Archbishop of Tours (died 1133), in the eleventh century and by the end of the twelfth century the term was in widespread use.[5]

The [Fourth Council of the Lateran](#), which convened beginning November 11, 1215,[6] spoke of the bread and wine as "transubstantiated" into the body and blood of Christ: *"His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been transubstantiated, by God's power, into his body and blood"*.

Basically, the bread and wine literally transform in substance into the flesh and blood of Christ.

And, as the priest is functioning as *alter Christus*, or literally as Christ, wholly/bodily representing Christ when dispensing the Eucharist, Christ is literally offering His body and blood as a sacrifice again, leading us to understand the perpetual sacrifice of Christ.

With each sacrifice, the participants in the Mass receive more and more of Christ' body and blood, bringing them even more "under Christ" and imparting more grace to the receivers.

Early church fathers wrote contrary teachings to transubstantiation:

Justin Martyr: *"Now it is evident, that in this prophecy allusion is made to the bread which our Christ gave us to eat, in remembrance of His being made flesh for the sake of His believers, for whom also He suffered; and to the cup which He gave us to drink, in remembrance of His own blood, with giving of thanks."*

- [Dialogue with Trypho](#)

Tatian: *"...It is not we who eat human flesh - they among you who assert such a thing have been suborned as false witnesses; it is among you that Pelops is*

*made a supper for the gods, although beloved by Poseidon, and Kronos devours his children, and Zeus swallows Metis." -Address to the Greeks*

Tertullian: "He says, it is true, that 'the flesh profiteth nothing;' but then, as in the former case, the meaning must be regulated by the subject which is spoken of. Now, because they thought His discourse was harsh and intolerable, **supposing that He had really and literally enjoined on them to eat his flesh**, He, with the view of ordering the state of salvation as a spiritual thing, set out with the principle, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; 'and then added, 'The flesh profiteth nothing,'-meaning, of course, to the giving of life. He also goes on to explain what He would have us to understand by spirit: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' In a like sense He had previously said: 'He that heareth my words, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but shall pass from death unto life.' Constituting, therefore, His word as the life-giving principle, because that word is spirit and life, He likewise called His flesh by the same appellation; because, too, the Word had become flesh, we ought therefore to desire Him in order that we may have life, **and to devour Him with the ear, and to ruminate on Him with the understanding, and to digest Him by faith.**"

One of the biggest problems with this teaching, however, is the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 9:12 NKJV - "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place **once** for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Hebrews 9:28 NKJV - "so Christ was offered **once** to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."

Hebrews 10:12 NKJV - "But this Man, after He had offered **one sacrifice** for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,"

But this was the standard teaching up until the time of the Protestant Reformation. And even now, this is the basic teaching of the importance of the Eucharist by Roman Catholics, East Orthodox and others.

And perhaps, if we held tradition above the Word of God, we would also be teaching and believing this. But by just reading the accounts in scripture, there is no room for such teaching. By interpreting scripture with scripture, there is no possibility for this teaching or any of the others, which include:

**Sacramental Union:** Martin Luther recognized many fallacy in the teachings of the Roman catholic church.

Could not completely sever his beliefs from theirs.

Elements are mystically united with the body and blood of Christ. More of a "spiritual" transformation.

**Consubstantiation:** In between transubstantiation and sacramental union.

The "substance" of the body and blood of Christ are present alongside the "substance" of the bread and wine.

What the bible teaches (outside of tradition): Presented by Christ

It is to be done in remembrance of Christ.

Called **Memorialism**. That the Lord's Table is a memorial only.

As defined by wikipedia, this belief began with the teaching of [Huldrych Zwingli](#) (Oorich Z-VING-GLEE), a pastor, theologian and contemporary of Martin Luther.

He was only taking Luke 22:19 literally. That it was to be done in remembrance of Jesus.

And Paul, who is establishing the proper administration of communion in 1 Corinthians makes no mention of any transformation or sacramental union, either physically, substantially or spiritually.

So, if it's not flesh, and not blood, what is it?

Just bread and juice.

Unleavened bread is used because of the symbolism of leaven or yeast in bread as sin.

A few examples:

[Matthew 16:5-12 NKJV](#) - "Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "[It is] because we have taken no bread." But Jesus, being aware of [it], said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?--[but] to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not tell [them] to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 NKJV - "Your glorying [is] not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth."

For the passover, unleavened bread is used, so logistically, this would have been the bread served and therefore used, but symbolically, this speaks of the purity of the body of Jesus, and how that He served as the spotless lamb.

In addition to the unleavened bread, there is the grape juice.

I say "grape juice" on purpose.

1. Jesus precedes and follows the 3 different accounts in the gospel with the statement "I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

So there is definitely a product of grape vines used.

2. There is no usage of the word wine, or anything indicating fermentation.

The authors all unanimously use the word "cup." In the greek, the word literally translates: "cup."

Traditionally with the passover meal, wine is used and served 4 times. Even to children. Which could get people drunk, especially if the wine was strong.

To counteract this, the wine would be "mingled" with water, thus avoiding drunken passovers. So, there is a possibility that mingled wine was served, but this is not mentioned by the authors.

More symbolism with the fruit of the vine: John 15:1-5 NKJV - "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

So, we are called to abide in Christ as He is the vine. How do we produce fruit? By abiding in the vine, taking in that living water, being one with the source of life.

The fruit is born while we abide.

That fruit is then taken and crushed.

Just like Jesus was crushed.

Then, that juice is able to be put in the cup and given to be consumed.

Much like Jesus was crushed, and only afterwards was salvation possible for all men. We are called into communion, or fellowship with Christ, and His suffering, that we might be crushed as well, and poured out, that Christ' work might be partaken of by the people around us.

And, grape juice is red, a tangible reminder of what Jesus has done. He has fulfilled the law with His blood. And now we are all partakers in salvation.

And, by symbolically serving His blood, Jesus is mirroring the giving of the first covenant: [Exodus 24:7-8 NKJV](#) - "Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood, sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.'"

"This cup is the new testament in my blood." "Not only the seal of the covenant, but the sanction of the new covenant: the end of the Mosaic covenant, and the confirming of a new one." -John Lightfoot.

[Hebrews 9:22 NKJV](#) - "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission."

There was still blood to be shed. [Hebrews 9:13-15 NKJV](#) - "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

And For this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."